

**From:** Hinson, Alex  
**Bcc:** [james\\_cason@ios.doi.gov](mailto:james_cason@ios.doi.gov)  
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## **Greens fault Zinke for overseas trip as report deadline looms**

**Jennifer Yachnin**

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Conservationists slammed Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke today for traveling overseas ahead of the deadline for his review of dozens of national monuments, noting that the Trump administration official has visited less than a third of the sites under evaluation.

The Center for Western Priorities pointed to a photograph published today by Zinke's wife, Lola Zinke, on her Twitter account, which shows the couple at sunrise along Turkey's Bosphorus.

Several hours later, Lola Zinke published another photo of herself with the tags "Happiness #Mykonos," possibly referring to the Greek island in the Aegean Sea.

The Interior Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Zinke's whereabouts, although a spokeswoman stated last week that the secretary could not be reached at that time as he celebrated his 25th wedding anniversary.

Zinke is scheduled to submit his final recommendations for potential reductions or even elimination of dozens of national monuments to President Trump next week.

The president ordered an assessment in late April of all national monuments created since 1996 that encompass more than 100,000 acres of land or sea.

"Our national monuments are full of beautiful places to take a summer trip. Secretary Zinke promised a rigorous analysis of national monuments, but what the American public got was a sham review and a foreign vacation," Center for Western Priorities Deputy Director Greg Zimmerman said.

He added, "If he bothered to listen, Secretary Zinke would have found that national monuments are cornerstones of Western economies, that they protect exceptional and unique lands, and, most of all, that virtually no Americans support eliminating national monuments. I worry, instead, he's moving to permanently shut down national monuments."

While Zinke has granted reprieves to six monuments to date — announcing yesterday that California's Sand to Snow National Monument would remain unchanged — and called for significant reductions to Utah's Bears Ears National Monument, he has yet to comment on the other 20 monuments under review (E&E News PM, Aug. 16).

Although the secretary has traveled across the country during the 3½ month review, he has visited eight of the 27 monuments included in his assessment. His stops have included Utah's Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, Nevada's Gold Butte and Basin and Range, New Mexico's Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, Maine's Katahdin Woods and Waters, Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou, and the Atlantic Ocean's Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine

national monuments.

Notably, he has not made official visits to any of the sites he has excused from the review to date, although his staff notes that he was familiar with the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in Montana as a native and a former House lawmaker of the state.

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Alex Hinson

Deputy Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
C: 202-641-5381